

THE OLD QUARRY.

A Large Part of It to be Filled Up and
Converted Into Building Lots.

An interesting article was printed in last Sunday's *Call* giving a brief history of the old Newark quarry, which has for a great many years been an eyesore to people travelling through Bloomfield Avenue. This unsightly spot has always seemed to be a dividing line between Newark and Bloomfield, and has certainly been an obstacle to the march of improvement in this direction. It will, however, soon be a thing of the past, for William A. Righter, who owns it and considerable land in the immediate vicinity, has a small army of men with horses and carts filling in the excavation, which has been growing steadily for more than half a century.

Surveyor Harrison Van Duyn has charge of the work, and it is intended to fill in the eastern half of the quarry and have Clifton Avenue continued from Bloomfield Avenue to Second Avenue by next fall. It will take over a thousand cubic yards of earth to blot out the quarry hole, and although hundreds of loads have been dumped in it already during the last two or three weeks, but little impression has been made. The workmen began at the northern bank of the quarry, and have excavated toward Second Avenue, throwing the earth behind them into the quarry hole, so that Clifton Avenue is being extended in both directions. The excavation for the street, however, will not give material enough, and the high bank on the upper side of Mt. Prospect Avenue will be lowered to within a few feet of the level of the avenue. The entire eminence will be eventually graded to nearly the level of both Clifton and Mt. Prospect Avenues, and the desirability of the locality for dwelling-house sites will be at once appreciated.

In past years the lots on the upper side of Mt. Prospect Avenue have remained unoccupied on account of the proximity of the quarry. No one wanted to have his home so near a place where blasting was constantly in progress, and besides this the Mt. Prospect Avenue bank was too high for many. A purchaser could never tell but that if he should put up a house there his neighbors might grade off the bank and break up the appearance of the building front. Under the new arrangement, however, these unpleasant features will be done away with, and in the opinion of many a parcel of the best building sites in the city will be the result.

Clifton Avenue, when completed to Second Avenue, will open up an exceedingly attractive locality also. There will be 2,900 feet front there and 1,900 on Mt. Prospect Avenue. One unique feature of the enterprise has been the alacrity with which people have recognized the value of the Clifton Avenue building sites. Lots are being purchased already, both on the line beyond the quarry and where the quarry now lies. The purchasers of these last sites are literally buying land which does not yet exist. They are securing building sites in the air. A year hence and all this locality will have undergone a remarkable change. The western end of the quarry may be worked for some little time, as Harper Brothers, who have charge of it at present, possess the right to continue excavations as far as Ridge Street. The days of this venerable industry, however, may safely be said to be numbered, and a brief history of it is not untimely.

About seventy years ago the Bloomfield Turnpike Company was engaged in completing the thoroughfare between Newark and Bloomfield. While the excavations for the roadbed were in progress, a few hundred feet west of what is now Mt. Prospect Avenue, a deposit of brownstone was discovered. The principal member of the Turnpike Company was Israel Crane. He immediately recognized the value of the stone and the significance of the discovery, and bent all his energies to developing it. There was not much of a demand for building-stone in Newark at that time, and the beginning of the quarry was quite humble.

It was first opened on the south side of the Bloomfield turnpike, and it is related that in the early years of the industry the excavations were carried close up to the turnpike, making it quite dangerous for vehicles passing that way, as they were likely to plunge down the embankment. One night a Newark minister and his wife were returning from Bloomfield when the horse lost his footing and they were hurled down into the quarry. The wife was killed. After that a rude fence of logs was put up.

In prosecuting the work of the quarry the workman encroached more and more upon the turnpike until the line of the road was moved north temporarily, the original road was excavated and subsequently filled in. This was the beginning of the quarry on the north side of Bloomfield Avenue and which is now being obliterated. The two quarries were then worked by Israel Crane for many years, and the rubbish was used to fill in the turnpike farther on toward Bloomfield.

William D. Patterson offered Mr. Crane \$75,000 for the two Bloomfield Avenue quarries. Mr. Crane was about to close with him, but after consultation with his brother decided not to sell. This sum doubtless seemed a very handsome one in those days, but if it had been accepted it would have been a mere song compared with what the quarries have

yielded. In the five years from 1868 to 1873, inclusive, one of the most prosperous periods in the quarry's history, about \$500,000 worth of stone was taken out. An experienced quarryman said that \$3,000,000 would be a safe estimate of the total value of the stone quarried there since the ground was opened.

Israel Crane finally sold the quarries to Messrs. Wheaton & Brown, and they then passed successively into the hands of C. B. Guerin, John A. Miller and Messrs. Rhodes & Doremus. The last named firm sold the quarry on the north side of Bloomfield Avenue to William A. Righter.

During the last twenty years the supply has diminished, or rather the quality of stone has depreciated. Year by year the stone grows smaller, and there is little doubt that the old industry will soon be a thing of the past.

Real Estate Transfers.

The following transfers of Bloomfield property were recently recorded at the Register's office:

Harry Bogert to J. P. Knight, \$1,000; Hannah Hopson to C. B. Hopson, \$800; C. L. Selbert to Geo. W. Slater, \$2,000; G. W. Slater to P. Selbert, \$1,200; W. T. Tallaferro to F. C. Osterhout, \$1; Katharina Wuerz to F. Kotch, \$3,000.

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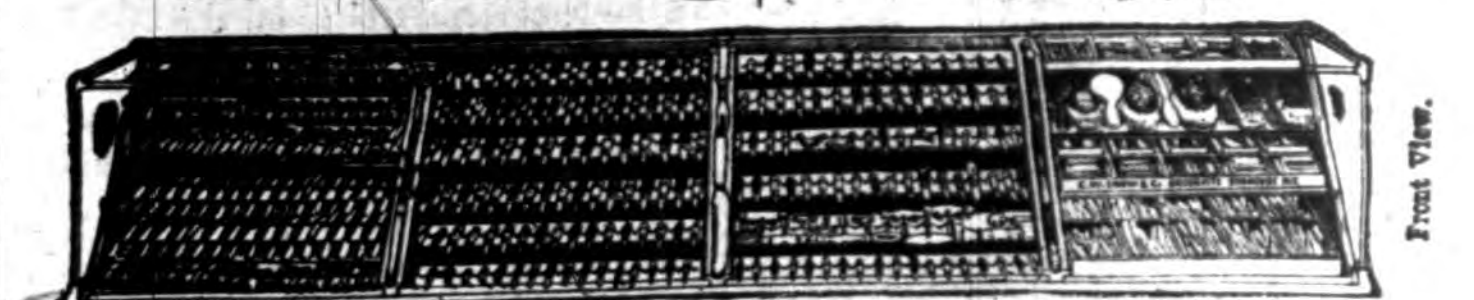
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